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THE
CONDITION
OF
THE INSANE IN MASSACHUSETTS.

BY
R. C. WATERSTON.

BOSTON:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.

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THE belief that something should be done for the Insane by the Legislature during its present session has led to the publication of the following statements. This pamphlet first appeared as an article in the Christian Examiner for January of the present year; simultaneous with this was published an article upon the same subject by Dr. Howe in the North American Review. To that able article I would earnestly refer all who desire to become acquainted with the real condition of a most miserable class of sufferers. May the solemn and startling facts now before the public lead to efficient action. The condition of so large a number, at this day suffering from shameful neglect, certainly deserves careful and candid consideration.

THE INSANE OF MASSACHUSETTS.

THERE are at this moment a large number of Lunatics in the Alms Houses and Jails of this Commonwealth. The thought is serious and sad to contemplate. Disease should be met with pity, not with punishment; and of all diseases, surely there is none more worthy of compassion than that under which the Lunatic suffers. How melancholy the thought of a blank, bewildered, and frantic brain; and that one thus bereft should be cast into a miserable cell and fettered in irons, seems inhuman. In a former day the idea of being able to restore the insane to health appears hardly to have entered the mind. For us there are other views. The wonderful success of many asylums has clearly proved what kindness, comfort, and judicious treatment may accomplish.

Few scenes can be more painful than those presented in some of our Alms Houses and Jails, owing to the deplorable situation of the Lunatics therein confined. We speak not now of what might have been seen fifteen or twenty years ago, but of what may be seen at this very day. Not many miles from the capital of the State is a poor Lunatic who has been chained for the last twenty years. The iron bracelet is screwed about each ankle, while both feet have been so frozen that nothing but the stumps remain. There the poor creature, with his tan-

gled gray hair hanging over his eyes, sleeps by night upon straw, and by day sits laughing in frantic mirth, goaded at times into maniac ferocity by his confinement. In the room below is an unfortunate female chained in the same manner, at times excited by the ravings above, and at others, by the jests of the passers by.

Connected with another asylum is a small building standing by itself. From that low edifice may be heard wild cries, snatches of hymns, songs, curses, prayers. On opening the door you behold, caged, a young woman ; she sleeps upon the floor over which straw is scattered. There through the cold winter she lives, if living it may be called, and at all times may be heard her mutterings and screams.

At another Alms House, in a low, narrow cell, crouches a man in middle life. There is no bed in the apartment, the atmosphere is offensive, and here, trembling with weakness, shivering with cold, pale and emaciated, you may behold the victim of disease and despair.

At another place may be seen eighteen bereft of reason, in varied conditions of misery ; and in the Jail of Middlesex there are confined more than twenty idiots and insane. What crime have they committed ? Why should they be there ? One poor creature has frequent epileptic convulsions, and is wasted away nigh unto death. Is a Jail a fitting place for him ? Shall these unfortunate fellow-beings continue thus through life ? — The thief is condemned for a stated time, and with a series of months or years comes his release. But when does the Lunatic gain release ? Not until he is cured ; and the very manner of his confinement is a guarantee that that can be, *never*. The longer the insane remain without proper medical care, the more deeply rooted becomes the disease, and the more aggravated its character.

We have alluded to a few individual cases. There are from

300 to 500 of such cases in the Commonwealth — of lunatics not properly provided for, and very many of whom absolutely suffer. Their situation is one of great severity, and Humanity cries aloud for their relief. They are now in places which were never intended to meet their wants. The keepers of the houses where they are placed may do all in their power, but they speak freely and earnestly of their inadequacy to keep the insane comfortable, and to secure them any prospect of a recovery. They may be found in cages, in cold sheds, in dark and damp cellars. They may be found in wretched destitution, stripped of their garments, and in the midst of filth. We desire not to exaggerate. The case is bad enough as it is, and needs not be made worse. The persons under whom these miserable beings are placed are not expected to understand much, or anything of proper medical treatment. They are furnished with no fitting accommodations, and desire, as much as any persons, that these sufferers should be placed elsewhere. Let it be remembered that hundreds are thus situated, and then conceive of the anguish which is daily experienced; and let it be asked and answered, is it to the honor of Massachusetts that such things should be allowed to continue?

Massachusetts has already done much in the philanthropic work of rescuing from misery this unhappy class. No State in the Union has done so much. Previous to 1818, though there might have been private asylums, there was no public Hospital for Lunatics in the Commonwealth. At that time the sufferings of the insane awakened such attention and interest, that the McLean Asylum was established. This noble institution commenced its work in the midst of doubt and discouragement. Many believed that the disease was incurable, and some, even among the medical profession, agreed in that opinion. This institution was considered an experiment, but the experiment was one of entire success. The Hospital was soon full, and

more patients applied than could be received. Many were restored, and returned in health to their friends. This institution has prospered beyond the most sanguine expectation of its warmest friends. During 1841, two hundred and eighty-three patients had received the benefit of the institution within the year, about one hundred and fifty being accommodated at any one time. During the twenty-four years of its operation, two thousand and thirteen lunatics have been received within its walls ; and of these, four hundred and fifty-six have been partially relieved, and eight hundred and seventy-seven restored to complete health. The successive labors of Drs. Wyman, Lee, and Bell, have given this institution a high character. The first individual labored as its superintendent for seventeen years, and did much to establish the character of the asylum. Dr. Lee died soon after he entered upon his labors, and Dr. Bell for the last six years has, by his professional skill and indefatigable zeal, fully sustained its well deserved reputation.

In this Institution strait waistcoats, handcuffs, and chains are all laid aside, and it is found that order is most successfully preserved under affectionate treatment. The inmates are led to understand, that if they comply with the mild laws of the place and exercise self-control, they will enjoy extended privileges ; and with this prospect, and under these influences, they are quickened into self-respect and gentle obedience. This institution was among the first that had the courage to try the experiment of mechanical labor ; and although, since the introduction of employment, heavy and sharp tools have been placed in the hands of many hundreds, not one accident has occurred.

This admirably conducted institution has been a source of inestimable good, and reflects the highest honor upon that part of our community who have given it encouragement and aid.*

* The expense to patients in this Hospital is \$3,50 per week for res-

In 1830 another Institution, the first of the kind in the country, was established. This was to be expressly for poor and imprisoned lunatics. Its plan was conceived in the spirit of true philanthropy. Great exertions were made by several individuals ; and perhaps to no one is the country more indebted than to the Hon. Horace Mann, now the Secretary of the Board of Education. Were this the only noble achievement of his life, he would not have lived in vain ; and the thought of that Humane Asylum will long be associated with his name. It was the expressed desire of the Board of Commissioners at that time, that all Lunatics then in prisons and jails throughout the Commonwealth should be removed to this asylum ; and in 1833 the Governor issued a proclamation to this effect. Whether this was literally answered in all the counties we do not know — but a great change was brought about.

Ten years have passed since the doors of this Institution were opened, and from that moment it has taken a strong hold upon the sympathies of the community. The energy and skill of those who have presided over it have been such as to gain the confidence of the public, and the highest regard of the most eminent men. The individual at its head, both by his uniform kindness, his calm determination, and consummate medical knowledge, has justly gained a reputation second to none in the country — perhaps it might safely be said — second to none in the world. Within nine years this institution has received and taken care of 1,359 lunatics — of these, 588 have been restored to health and usefulness. Of this number very many had been in cages and cells. Some had been in bondage for forty years. Some had been so neglected and abused that the accounts seem too fearful to be true. The

idents of the State — and \$4,50 per week for residents of other states. As this is not a Charity Hospital, none are admitted except such as can pay.

whole number comprized a more hopeless class of patients than were probably ever brought together with the thought of being cured. During the first year, one hundred and seven were received, who had been adjudged by the courts to be so furiously mad, as to be dangerous to the peace and safety of the community. One hundred looked upon all with enmity. Forty had stripped themselves and would not be clothed, even in the severity of winter; and yet, out of 1,359, 588 were restored to health.

We have seen what was their condition before going to the Asylum — it may be asked what was their treatment while in it? We are told in the trustworthy reports, that “during the whole period, not a blow has been struck, not a chain has been used, not a harsh word spoken.” “At this moment,” says the 6th Report, p. 59, out of 230 patients, but one individual, either man or woman, in our wards has upon his or her person any restraint whatever.” Mittens and wristbands are sometimes used, but very seldom. In the selection of attendants the most rigid caution is exercised. Such are selected as are firm, yet gentle; persons of cultivated minds, and strict morality. There are amusements for the inmates — riding, walking, dancing, swinging, blind-man’s buff, &c. There are pleasant and profitable employments; reading, writing, farming, and the like. The benefit of labor becomes more apparent every year. In the domestic departments, the cooking, washing, ironing, &c. are done principally by the inmates. In the last Report, 1842, we are told, that there are not twelve out of the one hundred and fifteen women in the establishment, who were not more or less employed every day. “We are indeed,” says the Report, “an industrious household, all busy, all having something to do, and all feeling that we are adding to the general stock of good.” There is a large library connected with the institution, from which

the inmates have the liberty of taking books. In 1837 a chapel was dedicated for religious worship. Since that time there have been in the hospital 845 patients, of whom 797 have attended religious worship. With few exceptions they are attentive listeners. Good order and solemnity pervade the chapel. The texts and portions of the discourse are remembered by nearly all. There is also a prayer meeting on Saturday evening, and a Bible class on the Sabbath. This was the first institution in the country, which had a chapel set apart for religious worship, though at the present time religious services are generally held at other asylums. These services are looked upon as of undoubted utility.

In the Report of 1841 is the following interesting statement.

“During the evening previous to the Sabbath, a patient furiously mad, was brought to the Hospital in the care of a Sheriff. He had been considered quite dangerous, and the Sheriff hesitated whether it would be safe to come with him, unless he was confined in irons. He appeared calm on the following morning, and it was proposed that he should attend Chapel; he seemed pleased with the privilege; attended the service all day, and conducted with the utmost propriety. These occurrences,” continues the Report, “which were of yesterday, are happening almost every Sabbath, and show most clearly the propriety and importance of religious worship to the insane.”

What a contrast does such a state of things present to the situation of those who are even to this day confined in damp, dark, cheerless dungeons. This magnificent Charity, this philanthropic Asylum for suffering humanity, may well be considered as one of the chief glories of New England. Every citizen of Massachusetts may kindle with holy joy as he contemplates its wide-spread influence. It is a noble manifestation of the humane spirit of the Commonwealth.

There is also an asylum at South Boston ; but this institution limits its benefits to the city. In 1837, when Samuel A. Eliot was mayor, he brought this subject before the public in his inaugural address.

“ There are many unfortunate idiots and maniacs in the House of Industry and Correction, for whom, under existing circumstances, no suitable accommodations are or can be provided. By the Revised Statutes, a hospital is required for such persons in the House of Correction. Would it not be becoming in a community of large resources and enlightened liberality, to provide for the comfort and safety of those also who are inmates of the House of Industry ? A hospital, fitted for the application of suitable treatment of these patients, would not only be honorable to the philanthropy of the city, but might result in such a diminution of their number as materially to lessen the expense of their support.”

In compliance with this suggestion a committee was appointed, who favorably reported ; and the result is, that an appropriate Hospital has been erected, and is now in successful operation. It was opened, Dec. 1839. In the Report of the Inspectors for June, 1841, it is said, “ It has become an established and prosperous institution.” “ It seems to be in successful action for the cure, relief, and mitigation of one of the greatest maladies which afflict the human race.” The Report goes on to show that many lunatics considered incurable have been restored, and that even the worst cases have shown improvement. The ‘incurable pauper,’ as the poor lunatic is at times called, can be, even in his worst estate, calmed, and rendered harmless and happy. Surely this is no slight thing, even if his disease is so rooted as not to be wholly overcome, though it is only in cases which have been long neglected that recovery is considered doubtful. In the Report of the Inspec-

tors for 1842, it is said, "The recent inspection of the Boston Lunatic Hospital has given renewed evidence of the wisdom of the city in establishing, and of the Superintendent and others in managing this important institution." About two hundred patients have received the benefits of this Asylum. This building was commenced as a receptacle for the poor and incurable insane of the city. As severe and hopeless cases were collected here, as were to be found in New England, yet general order pervades the establishment. Few restraints are ever needed. All are obedient and cheerful. The only thing which throws gloom over the picture is the result of old cases, where the effect of former neglect clings to the mind; but even in these cases kindness and care have produced decidedly beneficial effects, and frequently actual restoration. Here you may see those, who have been raging, peacefully engaged in manual labor, tilling the earth, cultivating flowers, making baskets, or otherwise engaged in active employment. Here, again, you may see them cheerfully mingling in innocent recreation; some engaged in chess and backgammon, some playing upon musical instruments, while others unite in singing. Thus are their minds diverted, their troubles dispelled. A new life is awakened in the mental nature, and new vigor added to the physical system. And here also every Sabbath you may see the insane listening with mild, yet earnest expression, to the truths of the Gospel.

Thus has the city of Boston honorably provided for this most unfortunate class of sufferers. The city government has thus far liberally sustained this institution, and established it upon such principles as may secure to it the interest of a Christian community.

Much, then, has been done in Massachusetts for the relief of the Insane. She has gone before all other States in the Union. And now, it may be asked, "Has she not done enough?"

“Are not these institutions sufficient to meet her wants?” It may be replied, that there are 500 insane in the State not yet under healing influences. That hundreds are still suffering, and many suffering intensely, in alms-houses, jails, and houses of correction. This is said not as a fancy, but as a fact. At this day there is a piercing cry coming up to us for relief.

But it may be asked, is there not room in the Hospitals now existing? It must be remembered that the McLean Asylum is an expensive institution, somewhat private in its character, and also, that it is full to overflowing. In their Reports for several years past they say they have been unable to receive all who have applied, and for those they have received, they have needed more room. The Hospital at Worcester is also full. It has generally 240 patients, and the number of apartments does not exceed 225. In the last Report, for 1842, it is said “There is scarcely a day in the year when every apartment is not occupied; and much of the time we have more persons in the establishment than we have rooms for their accommodation, and are obliged to lodge them in the halls and infirmaries. It is desirable to be full; but to be overrun, and then be constantly pressed with new cases, is a subject of great inconvenience.” “Every year since the Hospital was enlarged we have had applications enough, that have been rejected for want of room, to fill a good-sized establishment.”

The Hospital at South Boston is intended solely for the pauper lunatics of the city, and cannot open its doors to those who suffer beyond that limit.

Here then we see that there is not ample provision to meet existing wants. There are 1514 lunatics and idiots in the State to be provided for. In the three Hospitals there are accommodations for only 492, leaving 1022. Making a deduction for the idiotic, and those who can be provided for by

their friends, we have at least 500 for whom an asylum should be open. This estimate is verified by the pauper abstract, published in 1840, which gives 518 lunatic paupers, and 369 idiotic paupers. Consider then these 500 lunatics, or call it 300. Consider 300 poor, friendless, forlorn creatures; and must we not feel for them a pang of sympathy, and a desire to act for their good?

What then shall be done? A new Hospital must be established, or our existing institutions must be enlarged. If the present institutions can be enlarged so as to meet the want, this may answer; otherwise, we require a separate asylum.

Dr. Bell in his Report for 1839, says:

“To the active curable cases, it should be in the power of the Superintendent to devote as much of his time as will give him a minute knowledge of the mental habits, diseased impressions and physical condition of each individual, and acquire, as far as may be, his entire confidence and regard; “consequently,” he adds, “with uninterrupted health, an entire freedom from all personal care, and with all the aid that he desired, of experienced, capable, and conscientious assistants in every department, any increase of number would involve an inability to do them the greatest amount of good.”

He therefore objects to any enlargement of the institution.

We find that all the asylums which exist are overflowing; and the superintendent of one, who is a man of great experience in this subject, objects to any increase in the number of patients, on the ground of having as many now as can be properly attended to; and yet there are several hundred who are not included in either of these institutions. It is evident that something should be done. The charity of the past has brought its reward. But all has not yet been accomplished.

Let us consider some of the reasons why we should make exertions at this time.

1. The insane who are in alms-houses and jails often suffer very much where they now are. There are no accommodations for them. They cannot receive proper medical treatment. There is nothing calculated to give either happiness or relief. Those who have not visited the places where some of this class are now confined, can hardly understand the wretchedness of their situation. In not a few instances the insane are thrust away in garrets and cellars, [we speak advisedly] some with scanty food and fire, some with meagre apparel, and some bent to deformity by the low and narrow places in which they have been chained. There are other instances where they are treated with all the kindness which, in the places where they are, they could be expected to receive ; but in jails, alms-houses, and houses of correction, they cannot, from the very nature of the case, receive that attention and treatment which is proper.

2. The insane become worse through neglect. Their minds, filled with gloom at first through wrong treatment, sink into darkness and desolation. The iron enters their soul ;—their whole nature becomes more and more warped, and torn from its centre. It is comparatively easy to cure this disease, if taken early and treated aright. It is next to impossible to cure it, when long neglected and improperly managed. In speaking of the manner in which the insane were formerly neglected, and as many are dealt with at the present time, it is said, in the Massachusetts State Lunatic Hospital Reports : “ Were a system now devised, whose express object it should be, to drive every victim of insanity beyond the limits of hope, it would scarcely be within the power of a perverse ingenuity to suggest one more infallible, than that which, for so many years, has been in practical operation among us.” — p. 19.

Eighty or ninety out of every hundred, who are put into a proper asylum, within one year may reasonably be expected to recover ; while, if they have been longer without the advanta-

ges of proper treatment, the probability of restoration rapidly decreases. Even amid the peacefulness of home, with all the care of friends, the hope of recovery is greatly less than in a hospital established for the purpose.

Dr. Woodward's table shows, that 88 per cent. were cured of those, who had been insane less than one year ; 57 per cent. of those insane from one to two years ; 37 per cent. of those insane from two to five ; and 11 per cent. of those insane from five to ten years. (Rep. 1840.)

It is, therefore, important that there should be ample provision for the insane, that their disease may be speedily removed, and that the persons afflicted be not doomed for life to this grievous malady.

3. Although the immediate expense might be considerable of erecting a new hospital, or of adding new buildings to the hospitals already in operation, yet this step would be, in fact, a matter of real economy. We have seen, that under neglect, the disease remains for years, if not for life. In shortening the length of the disease we lessen expense. The old system brought constantly upon the State a burden of expenditure. In the poor-house and jail, the disorder becomes fixed ; in a hospital constructed with reference to the disease, the patient is generally restored. In all existing hospitals, the difficulty is with the cases which have been aggravated by just such a course as we are still pursuing in our alms-houses and jails. In the last Report of the South Boston Hospital, (City Doc. No. 17, p. 18,) it is said, "Of the old cases now in the house, [the result of a previous system, opposite to that now in operation,] it is to be expected, that nearly all will remain, till, in turn, each one shall pass to the grave." This is a general experience, showing the effect of neglect, and demonstrating, that a course which will restore is less expensive, even as a mere matter of dollars, than to fasten upon them a disease, which will make them the sources of public expense as long as they live.

Dr. Woodward, of Worcester, and Dr. Jarvis, late of Kentucky,* and others,† have entered into accurate calculations upon this subject, and the result shows, that new hospitals are a great advantage, on the ground of political economy.

4. But a higher reason than that of economy, and infinitely more imperative, is that of Humanity. Even were it an additional expense, this should be considered as no obstacle in the way. Indeed, we confess we are pleased to look upon those charities which do cost somewhat, for there seems to be a nobler element in them. It is a cheering sight to see a community voluntarily taxing themselves for the relief of the destitute. If the relief can be given, and the laws of nature are such, as is often the case, that the good brings more advantage than we sought, it is well. But in regard to this charity, cost what it might, within the bounds of possibility, it should be done. Ponder the appalling fact, that every day hundreds of these our fellow-beings suffer, and that every hour's delay, on our part, adds to their torture, and lessens the probability of their being restored. Then picture the happy change, if the same individuals could be placed in a proper asylum; and does not conscience speak,

* Dr. Jarvis has published two valuable pamphlets on the subject of Insanity, which first appeared in the Western Medical Journal.

† In 1837, it was estimated that there were between 600 and 700 lunatics in New Hampshire; 300 of these were paupers, and 200 were locked up in jails and cages. It was estimated, that 45 new cases were yearly added to the list of those considered incurable. Great exertions were made throughout the State to establish a hospital. The sum of \$15,000 was granted by the State, on condition that as large a sum could be obtained by private subscription. G. W. Haven, Esq., and several other gentlemen, made untiring efforts to awaken a right public feeling. Among other arguments, Mr. Haven entered into a calculation to show, that the erection of a new asylum for the reception of the insane would be a yearly saving to the State of \$15,000. During the last year, the hospital was completed, and Dr. Chandler, late of Worcester, was appointed its Superintendent.

as with the voice of God, "What thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might?" Remember, that in the poor-house and jail the fact is hardly known of any lunatics having been restored, while in the hospitals of this State over fourteen hundred have been positively cured, and seven hundred more have been greatly improved. Think of rejoicing parents welcoming back their restored child; think of children clasping again the parent, who was once insane, but whose countenance now beams with intelligent joy. These are the blessed result of well-established institutions; and while many are enabled to receive the benefits of such asylums as we have, hundreds are, for want of room, excluded. Are not these worthy of sympathy? And shall not the same generous community, which has already done so much, embrace all in the arms of its mercy?

And, once more, we may say, that we have reason to plead for this class, because they cannot plead for themselves. It is one of the evils of insanity, that it cannot gain a fair hearing, or make known its wants. It laughs in horrid mirth, while coals of fire are on its head. It shrinks and shudders before the phantoms of its own creation. It sits in morbid silence while disease is gnawing upon its life. The insane plead not for themselves, but will not every generous heart feel yet more for them, in remembrance of their forlorn condition?

And let us not forget, that this malady oftenest comes to the most richly endowed minds. Those who have fine sensibilities; those who have a tender conscience; those who have such spiritual energy as to exhaust the physical powers; such most frequently suffer. Do not such instances as those of Tasso, Sir Isaac Newton, and Robert Hall, show us that the noblest minds may be bowed under this affliction? Does not the remembrance of Cowper throw a sanctity around this painful disease? And have there not been those among us, highly gifted spirits,

who have become unstrung? whose splendid powers have been shrouded by this dark cloud? They may have been so fortunate as to have had friends, who have surrounded them with tokens of Christian kindness and care. But what becomes of the poor? Who asks for the pauper? Shall he be thrust into some Bridewell, and left there to suffer and die?

Connected with insanity, the past has much of horror, but the future is full of hope. Pinel, in France, some fifty years ago, first struck the chains from the maniac, and became a pioneer in this benevolent work. Rush, in our own country, even previous to that, published his famous Essay "on the influence of physical causes upon the moral faculty." This was read before the American Philosophical Society in 1786. Since the days of these distinguished men, the progress of enlightened and humane views has been very great. Much improvement has been made in Europe, particularly in Great Britain; but in no community has more been accomplished than in New England. No where has force been more generally exchanged for kindness, or the uses of manual labor been more practically and beautifully exhibited. In no place has there been a greater amelioration of distress, or more frequent cases of restoration. In no part of the world has the public mind looked with more increasing favor upon these institutions, or felt a stronger sympathy for this afflicted class. Thus has misery been alleviated, and humanity blessed.

Since writing the above, we have received the following interesting and valuable letter from Dr. Woodward, which we take the liberty of inserting.

"State Lunatic Hospital, Worcester, Dec. 13th, 1842.

* * * * *

"It is very certain, that more accommodations are needed for the insane of the Commonwealth, and that they will not, at this day, be furnished by private contributions, as was once the

case. The governments of the States have assumed this duty, and to them the public everywhere look, for whatever may be necessary, in this broad field of benevolence. If the subject is presented to the legislature at its next session, in its proper light, I have no doubt that something will be done to benefit this class of sufferers. I believe, that in the jails and houses of correction in the Commonwealth, there are now as many insane as when the State Lunatic Hospital was established. Perhaps the county of Suffolk is an exception, as their insane are now comfortably provided for in the City Hospital.

“ Within the ten years of our existence as a Hospital, there have been sent back to the jails, from this institution, 38 dangerous insane, besides a dozen or more, that were transferred from this Hospital to the Hospital at South Boston. The trustees have sent away, the past year, 51 as harmless and incurable, principally for want of room; 14 dangerous and incurable were sent away, mostly to the jails. More than 100 patients have been rejected for want of room, the majority of whom were residents in this State. We have constantly been crowded, and have had an average of about 8 patients through the year more than rooms for them to occupy.

“ These facts alone are sufficient to show, that more accommodations are needed for the insane in this Commonwealth. How and when they shall be made, is an important inquiry.

“ In this connexion I would say, that I am decidedly opposed to county institutions, as being too small to admit the right kind of superintendence and general management. They will most certainly degenerate into *insane poor-houses*, and in the event, be little better than the present receptacles. There should be no institution for the insane, without a medical head residing in it.

“ Large institutions for this class of the insane are better, in many respects, than small ones. Classification will be better, the facilities of business and labor better, and sufficient men of a trade will be collected to give encouragement for building shops and employing an overseer, cultivating a farm, and im-

proving a garden advantageously. Such is the case with our Hospital. We make from \$1100 to \$1200 worth of shoes annually; have carpenters, cabinet-makers, and mattress-makers in shops fitted for labor, and carried on with profit. We also assemble a respectable congregation on the Sabbath, and can employ a chaplain, to be exclusively devoted to our family.

"If we had 150 or 200 patients more, we could do all this equally well. Indeed, the poor are better off in the same institutions with the better classes. A good influence is felt by them, and motives are constantly before them to increase their self-respect, that they may associate with better society, the kind influence which must be extended to the better classes is contagious, and reaches them and their attendants.

"The State Lunatic Hospital has a fund of \$44,000, given by Mrs. Johonnot, of Salem, subject to a life annuity, at present amounting to about \$2400 or \$2500 annually. The board of trustees, at a recent meeting, voted to petition the Legislature to assume these annuities, and allow this fund to be expended in erecting about 150 rooms for the insane, appended to the present building. I am myself in favor of this proposition, because I believe the Legislature will be more willing to do this, than to appropriate a sum sufficient for the object, from the treasury of the State, and because, for this class, I think large institutions are both more economical, and better than small ones, and because I believe that there is more certainty, that the desired object will be immediately attained in this way than any other. * * . * * * *

"Yours respectfully,

S. B. WOODWARD."

No testimony could be more valuable than this. It should be remembered, however, that the provision proposed, while it would give accommodation to 150 or 200 more than are now provided for, would not be sufficient for all who should have a place in such an asylum. This additional provision would,

indeed, be a great gain. But we trust, that when this subject comes before the Legislature, there will be a committee appointed to enter into a thorough investigation of the number of insane throughout the State, and to report concerning their condition ; that the community may have authentic information upon this subject, and that provision may be made for all who are now neglected.

During the past year, several gentlemen, by visiting our jails and alms-houses, have endeavored to become better acquainted with the present state of things, and one individual, — a lady, who has long been practically interested in the moral welfare of those who are in prison, — has, at her own expense, not only visited alms-houses, jails, and hospitals in distant cities, but has visited within the last six months every county, and nearly every town in the State, and is at this time pursuing her investigation, which voluntary and Christian labor she will not close, until every alms-house and jail has been examined. The shameful neglect manifested in a few places, first awakened sympathy, and, with earnest perseverance, the work has, thus far, been carried through. These things show what can be accomplished by individual effort, and that there are substantial causes for continued exertion.

We do not doubt, that if this subject can be fairly brought before our State Government, ample accommodations will be provided for every lunatic in the State, either by the erection of a new asylum, or by the enlargement of those institutions which already exist. Should the Commonwealth persevere until this good work is accomplished, she will remove a fearful wrong from the midst of society, relieve hundreds from suffering, and complete what has been nobly begun ; a work which is worthy of a people's sympathy, and the fostering care of an enlightened government.

